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General

Madagascar, the world's fourth-largest island, lies in the Indian Ocean and is separated from the African continent by

the Mozambique Channel. The island is about 980 miles long and attains a maximum width of about 360 miles. The coasts of the island are generally low with the E shore being bordered at many places by lagoons.

The W shore is broken by the estuaries of many rivers and is fringed by numerous small islands and islets. The interior is formed mostly by a plateau with an average height of 300m. Several isolated massifs, 2,640 to 2,880m high, rise in the N, central, and S parts.

The climate is tropical along the coasts, temperate inland, and arid in the S part.

Buoyage System

The IALA Buoyage System (Region A) is in effect. See Chart No. 1 for further IALA Buoyage System information.

Cautions

Fishing

Trolling, trawling, and fishing with traps, handlines, gillnets, longlines, and purse seine nets is carried out in the vicinity of the island.

Buoyage

Buoyage around the island cannot be relied upon and navigational lights on the coasts are frequently reported to be extinguished or irregular.

Currency

The official unit of currency is the Malagasy franc, consisting of 100 centimes.

Government



Flag of Madagascar

Madagascar, which gained independence from France in 1960, is a republic.

The President is elected by popular vote for a 5-year term. The Prime Minister is appointed by the President.

As of 2001, the unicameral legislature consisted of a 150-member National Assembly elected for 4-year terms. In the near future, the legislature will become bicameral with the creation of an upper chamber called the Senate; members, two-thirds of which will be directly elected and one-third of which will be appointed, will serve 4-year terms.

The legal system is based on French civil law and traditional Malagasy law.

The capital is Antananarivo (Tananarive).

Holidays

The following holidays are observed:

New Year's Day	January 1
Commemoration of 29th March	March 29
Easter Sunday	Varies
Easter Monday	Varies
Labor Day	May 1
Ascension Day	May 12
Whit Sunday	Varies

Whit Monday	Varies
Independence Day	June 26
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	August 15
All Saints Day	November 1
Christmas Day	December 25
Anniversary of the Democratic Republic of Madagascar	December 30
Bridge Day	December 31

Industries

Agriculture and livestock raising are important industries. The principal crops are rice, coffee, vanilla, fruits, tapioca, sugar, cloves, cotton, sisal, cannabis, and tobacco.

The main industries include food processing, textiles, fishing, mining, glassware, cement, auto assembly, and oil refining.

Languages

The official languages are French and Malagasy.

Regulations

Except in case of emergency or distress, foreign fishing vessels are prohibited from entering the territorial waters off the ports of Antsiranana (Diego Suarez), Toamasina, Taolanaro, Hellville, Mahajanga, and Toliara. Anchorage may be authorized, temporarily, in certain circumstances.

Search and Rescue

In order to enable the authorities to implement rescue operations for vessels or aircraft in distress, all vessels navigating within the area bounded by 5°00'S, 60°00'E, 30°00'S, and the coast of Africa are requested to transmit to the nearest coast radio station in Madagascar, at 1000 UT(GMT) daily, their call sign, position, course, and speed. Messages, which are free of charge, should be addressed to "Cencorsau, Tananarive."

Time Zone

The Time Zone description is CHARLIE (-3). Daylight Savings Time is not observed.

World Time Zone Chart

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/ref/pdf/802801.pdf>

U.S. Embassy

The U.S. Embassy is situated at 14-16 Rue Rainitovo, Antsahavola, Antananarivo.

The mailing address is B.P. 620, Antsahavola, Antananarivo.

U. S. Embassy Madagascar Home Page

<http://www.usmission.mg>